DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 425 328 CE 077 702

AUTHOR	Lance, Keith Curry
TITLE	Colorado GED Study. How Colorado Graduates Benefit from Passing the GED Tests.
INSTITUTION	Colorado State Dept. of Education, Denver. State Library and Adult Education Office.
PUB DATE	1998-06-00
NOTE	32p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Persistence; Citizen Participation; Economic Status; Educational Attainment; *Educational Benefits; Employment Level; Employment Patterns; Graduate Surveys; Health; *High School Equivalency Programs; *Outcomes of Education; Postsecondary Education; Program Effectiveness; Psychological Characteristics; Questionnaires; State Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	*Colorado; *General Educational Development Tests

ABSTRACT

In 1996, follow-up questionnaires were mailed to a racially and ethnically stratified sample of 328 Coloradans who had earned General Educational Development (GED) diplomas in October-December 1995. Although responses were received from 235 (70%) of those surveyed, the response rates for African-Americans and Asian/Pacific Islanders were too low for their responses to be examined separately. Two-thirds of the respondents were currently working toward college degrees, and one-third were receiving on-the-job training. Nearly half the respondents credited their GED with helping them obtain paying jobs, obtain better jobs, be promoted, or perform their jobs better. Since obtaining their GED, two-fifths of the respondents enjoyed better personal finances, two-fifths spent more time keeping up with current events, one-fifth obtained library cards for themselves or a child and used libraries more frequently, one-fifth registered to vote, and one-fifth began attending or attended more local community events. Health and psychological benefits credited to the GED included the following: ability to set more realistic goals, greater satisfaction with life, increased openness to change, improved self-understanding and problem-solving ability, better diet and exercise habits, and increased rates of undergoing medical and dental checkups. The survey instrument is appended. The bibliography lists 16 references. (MN)

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ED 425 328

Colorado GED Study

How Colorado Graduates Benefit From Passing The GED Tests

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Colorado GED Study

How Colorado Graduates Benefit From Passing The GED Tests

1998

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Funded By
The Adult Education Act 100-297 Section 353
Administered through
The Colorado Department of Education
State Library and Adult Education Office

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201 East Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203-1704

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary **1**

Introduction **3**

Purpose of the Study **5**

Methodology **5**

Questionnaire 5

Sample, Respondents and Response Rate 6

Findings of the Study **7**

Why Did GED Graduates Leave School? 8

Why Did GED Graduates Decide to Take the GED Tests 9

What Further Educational Goals Are GED Graduates Pursuing? 10

How Has Their Employment Status Changed? 11

How Have Their Personal Finances Changed? 12

How Have Their Educational and Cultural Activities Changed? 13

How Has Their Community Participation Changed? 14

What Health Benefits Have They Experienced? 15

What Psychological Benefits Have They Experienced? 16

Conclusions of the Study **17**

Appendices **19**

Survey of GED Graduates 21

References 27

Executive Summary

In 1996, the Office of Adult Education's Colorado Literacy Research Initiative conducted a follow-up survey of over 300 1995 GED graduates to measure the impact of passing the GED Tests on their educational and employment status, personal finances, educational and cultural activities, community participation, and health and psychological benefits. Of those 328 GED graduates, 235 responded (70 percent).

Educational and Employment Status

- Two out of three were currently working toward college degrees.
- One-third were receiving on-the-job training.
- Almost half reported getting paying jobs, changing to other jobs, being promoted, or performing their jobs better.

Personal Finances

- Two out of five reported improvement in their personal finances, such as receiving a raise or becoming a homeowner.

Educational and Cultural Activities

- Two out of three encouraged others to stay in school, prepare for the GED tests, or pursue other educational opportunities.
- Two out of five spent more time keeping up with current events.
- One out of five got a library cards for themselves or a child or used libraries more frequently.

Community Participation

- One out of five registered to vote.
- One out of five began attending or attended more local events, such as festivals, fairs, benefits, or walks.

Health and Psychological Benefits

- Two-thirds set more realistic goals for their future and were more satisfied with life.
- Two out of five felt more open to change.
- A third said they understood themselves better and did better at solving problems in their lives.
- Almost a third did more to prevent poor health like starting to diet or exercise.
- One out of five went for more regular medical and dental checkups.

The full report also examines the reasons respondents gave for leaving school as well as for returning and compares and contrasts the responses of men and women as well as Hispanics and other racial/ethnic groups.

Introduction

In recent years, there have been more than 30 studies of the impact of GED programs. Collectively, what these studies suggest is the wide variety of desirable outcomes that result from someone passing the GED tests. This study encompasses all of those potential impacts in a single survey to achieve Colorado's first truly comprehensive snapshot of the payoffs of the GED Testing Program. This report describes in detail the results of that survey.

After reporting the overall results regarding a particular benefit of passing the GED tests, each section of this report also considers how major sub-groups of respondents answered differently. In these findings, the influence of Hispanic culture on individuals from that ethnic group as well as the effects of the different roles played by men and women are clear.

In addition to profiling the benefits of passing the GED tests to both the graduates and their families, this study also explores two key issues prior to the impact issue: Why did these individuals leave school before graduating from high school? And, what motivated them to prepare for and take the GED tests?

Purpose of the Study

Like all publicly funded enterprises, the GED Testing Program in Colorado strives to be accountable for its expenditure of taxpayer dollars. The ultimate accountability question is "What difference does this program make in the lives of Colorado residents?" The purpose of this study was to identify the direct benefits to Colorado graduates—both tangible and intangible—of passing the GED tests. The indirect benefits derived by other residents and the State of Colorado as a whole will be subjects of additional, later research.

Methodology

Since 1990, the impact of the GED Testing Program has been the subject of at least 10 national and 21 state studies. The overwhelming majority of these studies involved asking GED graduates to identify benefits they experienced after passing the GED tests. (Many also drew on available data from GED testing programs at either the program or individual level.) These surveys explored a variety of potential impacts including: continuing education, employment and other economic benefits, personal goals, and self-esteem. Colorado's Office of Adult Education (OAE) identified additional potential impact areas, many of which have been the subject of little, if any, earlier research. These areas include: educational and cultural activities, community participation, and health benefits. In addition, OAE staff were interested in relating such impacts to the reasons why students left school before graduating from high school and the reasons why they were motivated to take the GED tests. Because this survey encompasses all of these issues, it is probably the most comprehensive such survey to date.

Questionnaire

This survey employed a six-page, mailed questionnaire divided into nine sections: current educational status, current employment status, personal finances, educational and cultural activities, community participation, health benefits, psychological benefits, and personal background. (See Appendices for the complete questionnaire.)

Sample, Respondents and Response Rate

The sample for this survey consisted of 328 Coloradans who earned GED diplomas between October and December 1995. The names and addresses of these graduates, along with some basic demographic data about them, was obtained from a series of monthly databases produced by the Information Management Services unit of the Colorado Department of Education. The sample was stratified by race and ethnicity in an effort to assure that as many racial and ethnic groups as possible were represented statistically. Of those 328 GED graduates, 235 responded. (Response rate: 70 percent) Unfortunately, the response rates for African-Americans and Asian/Pacific Islanders in the sample were not adequate to examine their responses separately.

The typical respondent was 20 years old, slightly more likely to be female than male (60 v. 40 percent), likely to be either White or Hispanic (43 and 34 percent, respectively), and single (67 percent) and childless (median numbers of children under age 5 and ages 5 to 17: zero).

Three factors are probably largely responsible for the high response rate:

- The survey mailing included a postage-paid, addressed return envelope.
- Survey respondents were notified in the accompanying cover letter that they would receive a check for five dollars if they responded completely, regardless of the nature of their responses. (Note: While respondents were allowed to remain anonymous, a temporary code permitted the researchers to identify non-respondents and to assure that multiple responses were not received from the same individual.)
- A second mailing, including replacement of those originally selected whose addresses were no longer valid, was sent.

Findings of the Study

This study posed nine major questions about how Colorado GED graduates. The first two questions concern the circumstances that brought people into the GED Testing Program. They are:

- Why did GED graduates leave school?
- Why did GED graduates decide to take the GED Tests?

The remaining seven questions all derive from the basic question of the study: how do Colorado graduates benefit from passing the GED Tests? They are:

- What further educational goals are GED graduates pursuing?
- How has their employment status changed?
- How have their personal finances changed?
- How have their educational and cultural activities changed?
- How has their community participation changed?
- What health benefits have they experienced?
- What psychological benefits have they experienced?

Why Did GED Graduates Leave School?

Survey respondents were asked to identify the reasons why they left school. Acknowledging that there are usually many reasons for not completing school, this item asked respondents to mark all reasons that applied to them. While almost a quarter (24 percent) identified "poor grades" as one of the reasons they left school, many other reasons were cited more or almost as often.

Table 1 ◆ Selected Reasons for Not Completing School Given by Colorado GED Graduates, 1996

Reason	Percent
Not interested in school	40%
Pregnancy (females only)	27%
Poor Grades	24%
To take a job	18%
Peer pressure	17%
Problems with drugs	17%
Problems with teachers	17%
Expelled or suspended	16%
Problems with alcohol	14%

Two out of five reported they were simply "not interested in school." More than a quarter of female respondents left school because they were pregnant. One out of six reported each of the following reasons for leaving school: to take a job, peer pressure, problems with drugs, problems with teachers, and being expelled or suspended. One out of seven reported leaving school because of problems with alcohol.

Hispanic respondents were more likely than others to report leaving school because of peer pressure (22 v. 17 percent) and less likely to report leaving because of problems with teachers (10 v. 17 percent).

In addition to pregnancy, women were overwhelmingly more likely than men to have left school because they were married (14 v. one percent) and 50 percent more likely than men to have left school because they became caregivers to sick family members (nine v. six percent).

Intergenerational effects also help to explain why some Hispanic and female respondents left school and returned to take the GED tests. Hispanics were more likely than other respondents to have mothers and fathers who did not graduate from high school (37 v. 22 percent and 39 v. 25 percent, respectively). Women were twice as likely as men to have mothers and fathers who had dropped out before completing high school (27 v. 14 percent and 31 v. 15 percent, respectively). Women were also three times as likely as men to have fathers who passed the GED Tests (nine v. three percent) and twice as likely to have mothers who did so (14 v. seven percent).

Why Did GED Graduates Decide to Take the GED Tests?

When asked to identify the reason or reasons they decided to take the GED Tests, almost three out of four respondents (71 percent) cited "personal enrichment." Almost two out of five (38 percent) indicated that passing the GED Tests was a requirement for admission to an educational institution, and one out of seven (16 percent) indicated that obtaining a GED was required for a job they were seeking.

While these responses suggest that a large majority of GED graduates sought a high school equivalency diploma as an end in itself, over half also planned to employ it as a means to an end—to pursue either further education or a better job.

Table 2 ◆ Selected Reasons for Deciding to Take the GED Tests Given by Colorado GED Graduates, 1996

Reason	Percent
Personal enrichment	71%
Required for educational admission	38%
Required for a job I am seeking	16%

Very small percentages identified other reasons for taking the GED Tests. These reasons included: required for present job (five percent), required to enter the Armed Forces (two percent), and to become a U.S. citizen (one percent).

What Further Educational Goals Are GED Graduates Pursuing?

For many GED graduates, a high school equivalency diploma is a stepping stone to higher education. For others, it is a necessary first step toward vocational or technical training.

Colorado GED graduates were asked if they were currently working on a college degree. They were also asked if they were currently enrolled in any college-credit, vocational or technical training, or non-credit courses or if they had participated in any on-the-job training during the past six months. Over half of the respondents (57 percent) reported working toward an associate's degree. Another nine percent reported a bachelor's or graduate degree as their goal.

Table 3 ◆ Colorado GED Graduates Currently Working Toward a College Degree, 1996

Degree	Percent
Associate's degree	57%
Bachelor's degree	5%
Graduate degree	4%
Total	**66%**

Female respondents were more likely than men to be:

- enrolled in college courses for credit (36 v. 29 percent),
- in vocational or technical training (25 v. 15 percent), and
- taking non-credit courses (17 v. 13 percent).

But, male respondents were more likely than women to be pursuing graduate degrees (seven v. three percent).

Hispanics were more likely than all respondents to be working toward associate's degrees (67 v. 57 percent).

Table 4 ◆ Types of Continuing Education Being Pursued by Colorado GED Graduates, 1996

Type of Course/Training	Percent
Course for college credit	34%
Vocational/technical training course	21%
Non-credit course	15%
On-the-job training	34%

One-third of the respondents were currently enrolled in courses for college credit. One out of five (21 percent) was enrolled in a vocational or technical training course. One out of seven (15 percent) was participating in a non-credit college, vocational, or technical training course. One third (34 percent) also reported participating in on-the-job training activities.

Male respondents were slightly more likely than women to be receiving on the job training (36 v. 33 percent).

How Has Their Employment Status Changed?

For GED graduates, like other Colorado residents, there is a strong relationship between education and employment. It is safe to assume that the vast majority of those who seek to advance their education expect there to be some ""payoff" in the labor market. That "payoff" may be getting a paying job, changing to another job, getting a promotion, or simply being able to perform better at an existing job.

Table 5 ◆ Changes in Employment Status Reported by Colorado GED Graduates, 1996

Employment Change	Percent
Got a paying job	20%
Changed to another job	17%
Perform better in my job for my present employer	10%
Received a promotion from my present employer	9%

Almost half of Colorado GED graduates (48 percent) reported positive changes in their employment status. One out of five (20 percent) got a paying job. One out of six (17 percent) changed to another job. One out of ten (10 percent) improved their current job performance. And, one out of 11 (nine percent) received a promotion.

Male respondents were four times more likely than women to report receiving promotions (16 v. four percent) and somewhat more likely to have changed jobs (20 v. 16 percent).

How Have Their Personal Finances Changed?

GED graduates also expect that earning a diploma will have positive effects on their personal finances as well as their job situations. Some simply want to earn more money, whether by finding better paying jobs or receiving raises or other salary increases on existing jobs. Others hope to improve the quality of their home life by moving to a better home or neighborhood. Some even hope to join the ranks of homeowners.

More than two out of five Colorado GED graduates reported at least one positive change in their personal finances since passing the GED tests. One out of five found a better paying job with another employer. One out of eight received a raise or other salary increase from their present employers. And, one out of 12 moved to a better home or neighborhood. Almost half of those who moved became homeowners.

Table 6 ◆ Changes in Personal Finances Reported by Colorado GED Graduates, 1996

Personal Finances Change	Percent
Found a better paying job	19%
Received a raise/other salary increase	12%
Moved to a better home/neighborhood	8%
Became a homeowner	3%

Male respondents were three times more likely than women to report having received raises (20 v. six percent) and twice as likely to report getting better paying jobs (28 v. 14 percent). Female respondents were four times more likely than men to become new homeowners (four v. one percent) and twice as likely to move to better homes or neighborhoods (ten v. five percent).

How Have Their Educational and Cultural Activities Changed?

One of the most conspicuous changes in the lives of GED graduates and their families is their increased participation in educational and cultural activities. Such activities not only benefit the graduate, but also their family and friends. More than three out of four GED graduates (77 percent) reported increases in this type of activity. Two-thirds of GED graduates have encouraged others to stay in school, prepare for the GED, or pursue other educational opportunities, and two out of five spend more of their own free time keeping up with current events.

Table 7 ◆ Increased Educational & Cultural Activities of Colorado GED Graduates, 1996

Increased Educational/Cultural Activity	Percent
Encouraged others to stay in school, prepare for GED, or pursue other educational opportunity	66%
Spend more time keeping up with current events	42%
Got a library card for self or child/started using libraries more frequently	17%
Discuss school matters with child(ren) more frequently	16%
Started—or do better job at—helping child(ren) with school work	15%
Acquired a home computer	14%
Attend plays or concerts, visit museums more frequently	13%
Began communicating—or communicating more—with child(ren)'s teacher(s)	11%
Child(ren)'s attitude(s) towards school more positive	11%

Hispanic respondents were more likely than others to report:

- encouraging others to stay in school, prepare for the GED, or pursue other educational opportunities (76 v. 66 percent),
- starting or doing a better job at helping their children with school work (22 v. 15 percent), and
- beginning to communicate or communicating more with their children's teachers (16 v. 11 percent).

Female respondents were more likely than men to report all types of educational and cultural activities; most notably, encouraging others to pursue their education (79 v. 49 percent).

How Has Their Community Participation Changed?

Another area of increased activity for GED graduates is participation in political and civic activities in their communities. Almost two out of five respondents (39 percent) reported some increased activity in this area.

Considering when they took the GED Tests and the election schedule, remarkably high proportions of GED graduates reported increased political activity. One out of five GED graduates registered to vote, and one out of 10 actually cast a vote between October 1995 and June 1996. Notably, the only general election at the state or national level during this interval occurred before two-thirds of the graduates had even taken the GED Tests. (That probably explains why only two percent reported participating in a political caucus, campaign rally, or other election-related event.)

Table 8 ◆ Changes in Community Participation Reported by Colorado GED Graduates, 1996

Community Participation Change	Percent
Registered to vote	20%
Began to attend or increased attendance at local events (festivals, fairs, benefits, walks)	17%
Began voting in elections	10%
Started doing or increased volunteer work	9%
Joined a community organization or hobby group	7%

Female respondents reported higher increases than men in level of political participation. Women were almost twice as likely as men to register to vote (24 v. 14 percent) and almost three times as likely as men to participate in a political caucus, campaign rally, or other political event (three v. one percent).

Beyond politics, many GED graduates reported increases in other types of community activity after passing the GED Tests. One out of six reported beginning to attend or increasing attendance at local community events, such as festivals, fairs, benefits, and walks. Almost one out of ten started doing or increased their volunteer work in the community. One out of 14 joined a community organization or hobby group.

Female respondents were almost twice as likely as men to report beginning to attend or increasing attendance at local community events (21 v. 12 percent) and almost half again as likely as men to report starting to do or increasing volunteer work (11 v. seven percent).

What Health Benefits Have They Experienced?

When the benefits of passing the GED Tests are discussed, the health benefits to graduates and their families do not leap to mind. Indeed, there has been only one published study to date exploring this possibility. Of Colorado GED graduates, half of those responding report improved health practices affecting themselves and/or their families. Almost a third of respondents report that they do more to prevent poor health, such as watching their diets and exercising. One out of six receives medical and dental checkups on a more regular basis, and takes their children for medical -- checkups and inoculations on a more regular basis. One out of seven reports missing fewer days of work due to illness.

Table 9 ◆ Health Benefits Reported by Colorado GED Graduates, 1996

Health Benefit	Percent
Do more to prevent poor health (watch diet, exercise)	30%
Receive medical checkups on a more regular basis	17%
Receive dental checkups on a more regular basis	17%
Take child(ren) for medical checkups and inoculations (shots) on a more regular basis	15%
Miss fewer days of work due to illness	14%

Compared to other respondents, Hispanics reported consistently greater improvements in personal and family health practices in general (62 v. 50 percent overall).

Female respondents were more likely than men to report doing more to prevent poor health (33 v. 26 percent), receiving medical checkups on a more regular basis (19 v. 14 percent), and missing fewer days of work due to illness (18 v. 10 percent). Female respondents were also much more likely to report intergenerational health benefits. Women were more than three times as likely as men to report taking their children for medical checkups and inoculations on a more regular basis (32 v. nine percent) and more than four times as likely as men to report taking their children in for dental checkups on a more regular basis (18 v. four percent).

What Psychological Benefits Have They Experienced?

Far and away the greatest benefits of passing the GED Tests reported by Colorado graduates were psychological benefits. While the direct benefits of improvements in self-esteem and problem-solving and communication skills are difficult to quantify, they are likely to ameliorate a variety of personal and social problems, such as crime, particularly domestic and workplace violence, and its potential aftermath, including overloads of criminal and civil court cases, increased demand for foster care providers, and greater worker compensation costs.

Almost nine out of ten respondents reported some type of improvement in their psychological health. Two-thirds of respondents reported that they set more realistic goals for their future and were more satisfied with life in general. Two out of five reported feeling more open to change. A third reported doing better at solving problems in their lives, understanding themselves better, communicating better with others verbally, and having more respect for the opinions of others. More than a quarter reported feeling more confident about their children's future, getting along better with family and friends, and communicating better with others in writing. Almost a quarter reported greater job satisfaction. And, one out of six reported getting along better with coworkers.

Table 10 ◆ Psychological Benefits Reported by Colorado GED Graduates, 1996

Psychological Benefit	Percent
Set more realistic goals for my future	63%
Am more satisfied with life in general	62%
Feel more open to change	44%
Do better at solving problems in my life	37%
Understand myself better	36%
Communicate better with others verbally	35%
Have more respect for opinions of others	31%
Feel more confident about my child(ren)'s future	29%
Get along better with family and friends	29%
Communicate better with others in writing	27%
More satisfied with my job	23%
Get along better with coworkers	15%

Hispanic and female respondents reported consistently higher psychological benefits generally and of each particular type. Once again, female respondents reported greater intergenerational benefits than men. Women were more than twice as likely to report feeling more confident about their children's future (38 v. 15 percent).

Conclusions of the Study

The major findings of this study fall into three categories: socio-economic benefits, cultural benefits, and intergenerational benefits.

The socio-economic benefits of passing the GED tests are clear and direct: furthering one's education, getting a job—or a better job, getting a raise, and even buying a home. Quantifying the dollar value of those benefit should not be too difficult, and has been the subject of other research by the author since completing this study.

The cultural benefits of passing the GED tests are less tangible, but speak powerfully to the impact of education on quality of life. After passing the GED tests, graduates are more likely to maintain and improve their physical and mental health, keep up with current events, vote, use libraries, attend community events, and encourage others who dropped out of high school to return and complete their education. These types of outcomes improve the quality of life not only for graduates, but for the communities in which they reside.

The intergenerational benefits of passing the GED tests are the most difficult to demonstrate, but, if the reports of graduates are anything to go on, may be the most powerful and enduring benefits of all. How do we count the long-term payoff of a parent being more likely to safeguard the health of a newborn, to read to a toddler, to take a school age child to the library, or to see to it that their own teenager does not make the mistake of leaving school that they did? What this generation of GED graduates reported about their own reasons for leaving school—more the behavioral expectations of public school officials and peer pressure than bad grades—suggests that having parents who are more supportive of educational success and participation in educational and extracurricular activities may be all it takes to break the generational cycle of failure to complete school. In the wake of this study—and because of these findings—the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative will be turning next to study family literacy programs.

Appendices

Survey of GED Graduates

References

Adult Education Office ■ Colorado Department of Education

SURVEY OF GED GRADUATES
Due Date: August 12, 1996

Please respond to each and every item in this questionnaire. Note that some items ask you to mark only one response, while others ask you to mark all responses that apply to you. If you wish, feel free to add any notes in the margins that may clarify your answers. If you have any questions about this survey that you would like answered before responding to it, contact Keith Lance at (303) 866-6737, fax (303) 866-6940, or e-mail klance@csn.net.

Current Educational Status

1. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Mark (X) one.

❑ GED
❑ Associate's degree
❑ Bachelor's degree
❑ Master's degree
❑ Doctorate
❑ Other--please specify _____

2. Are you currently working toward a college degree? Mark (X) one.

❑ Associate's degree
❑ Bachelor's degree
❑ Master's degree
❑ Doctorate
❑ Other--please specify _____

3. Are you currently enrolled in any course(s) for college credit? Mark (X) one.

❑ Yes ❑ No

4. Are you currently enrolled in any vocational or technical training course(s)? Mark (X) one.

❑ Yes ❑ No

5. Are you currently participating in any non-credit college, vocational, or technical training course(s)? Mark (X) one.

❑ Yes ❑ No

6. Have you participated in any training activities related to your job during the past six months? Mark (X) one.

❑ Yes ❑ No

Current Employment Status

7. What was your employment status just before you passed the GED tests, and what is it today? Mark (X) one under "Before you passed the GED tests" and one under "Today.".

Before you passed the GED tests			Today
❑	a.	Employed FULL-TIME FOR PAY	❑
❑	b.	Employed PART-TIME FOR PAY	❑
❑	c.	Employed full-time or part-time for pay ON A TEMPORARY BASIS (for example: through a temporary employment agency)	❑
❑	d.	Working, but NOT FOR PAY (for example: volunteer, homemaker)	❑
❑	e.	NOT employed, but SEEKING a job	❑
❑	f.	Retired	❑
❑	g.	Disabled, and UNABLE to work	❑
❑	h.	Otherwise NOT employed, and NOT seeking a job	❑
❑	i.	Other--please specify _____	❑

Employment Since Passing the GED Tests

8. How has your employment changed since passing the GED tests? Mark (X) all that apply.

- ❑ a. Got off public assistance (for example: AFDC, welfare)
- ❑ b. Got a paying job
- ❑ c. Changed to another job
- ❑ d. Entered the military
- ❑ e. Perform better in my job for my present employer
- ❑ f. Received a promotion from my present employer
- ❑ g. None of the above

Personal Finances Since Passing the GED Tests

9. How have your personal finances changed since passing the GED tests? Mark (X) all that apply.

- ❑ a. Received a raise or other salary increase from my present employer
- ❑ b. Found a better paying job with another employer
- ❑ c. Started saving or investing money, or saved or invested more
- ❑ d. Moved to a better home, neighborhood
- ❑ e. Became a homeowner
- ❑ f. None of the above

Educational & Cultural Activities Since Passing the GED Tests

10. How have your educational and cultural activities changed since passing the GED tests? Mark (X) all that apply.

- ❑ a. Discuss school matters with my child(ren) more frequently
- ❑ b. Started--or do a better job at--helping my child(ren) with their school work
- ❑ c. Began communicating--or communicating more--with my child(ren)'s teacher(s)
- ❑ d. Child(ren)'s attitude(s) towards school are more positive
- ❑ e. Child(ren)'s school work improved
- ❑ f. Child(ren) became more involved in extra-curricular activities (for example, band, choir, school clubs, sports, scouting)
- ❑ g. Got involved or more involved in my children's school activities
- ❑ h. Encouraged others to stay in school, prepare for the GED, or pursue other educational opportunities
- ❑ i. Got a library card for myself or a child or started using libraries more frequently
- ❑ j. Spend more time keeping up with current events (for example: reading books, newspapers, or magazines; watching TV; listening to radio)
- ❑ k. Attend plays or concerts or visit museums more frequently
- ❑ l. Acquired a home computer
- ❑ m. Joined a commercial online information service (for example: America Online, Compuserve, Prodigy)
- ❑ n. None of the above

Community Participation Since Passing the GED Tests

11. How has your participation in your community changed since passing the GED tests? Mark (X) all that apply.

- ❑ a. Began to attend or increased attendance at local community events (for example: festivals, fairs, benefits, walks)
- ❑ b. Joined a community organization or hobby group
- ❑ c. Started doing or increased volunteer work in my community
- ❑ d. Registered to vote
- ❑ e. Participated in a political caucus, campaign rally, or other election-related event
- ❑ f. Began voting in local, state, or national elections
- ❑ g. None of the above

Health Benefits Since Passing the GED Tests

12. How has your health and your family's health changed since passing the GED tests? Mark (X) all that apply.

- ❑ a. Do more to prevent poor health (watch diet, exercise)
- ❑ b. Miss fewer days of work due to illness
- ❑ c. Receive health check-ups on a more regular basis
- ❑ d. Take child(ren) for health check-ups and inoculations (shots) on a more regular basis
- ❑ e. Receive dental check-ups on a more regular basis
- ❑ f. Take child(ren) for dental check-ups on a more regular basis
- ❑ g. None of the above

Psychological Benefits Since Passing the GED Tests

13. How have you benefited psychologically from passing the GED tests? Mark (X) all that apply.

- ❑ a. Feel more confident about my child(ren)'s future
- ❑ b. More satisfied with my job
- ❑ c. Set more realistic goals for my future
- ❑ d. Do better at solving problems in my life
- ❑ e. Feel more open to change
- ❑ f. Understand myself better
- ❑ g. Have more respect for opinions of others
- ❑ h. Communicate better with others verbally
- ❑ i. Communicate better with others in writing
- ❑ j. Get along better with family and friends
- ❑ k. Get along better with co-workers
- ❑ l. Am more satisfied with life in general
- ❑ m. None of the above

Personal Background

14. What is your age? Enter in years. _____

15. What is your sex? Mark (X) one. ❑ Female ❑ Male

16. What is your racial or ethnic background? Mark (X) one of the following:

❑ American Indian
❑ Asian/Pacific Islander
❑ Black (African American)
❑ Hispanic
❑ White
❑ Other--please specify _____

17. What is the first language you learned to speak? Mark (X) one.
❑ English ❑ Spanish
❑ Other--please specify _____

18. What is your marital status? Mark (X) one.

❑ Single
❑ Married
❑ Separated
❑ Divorced
❑ Widowed

19. How many children live in your home who are ...

a. under age 5? (Enter '0,' if appropriate.) _____

b. ages 5-17 (Enter '0,' if appropriate.) _____

20. What is the highest level of education completed by the parent(s), guardian, or other adult who raised you? Mark (X) one in each column that is appropriate for you:

	Mother	Father	Guardian/Other
Did not graduate from high school	❑	❑	❑
High school diploma	❑	❑	❑
GED	❑	❑	❑
Some college	❑	❑	❑
Associate's degree	❑	❑	❑
Bachelor's degree	❑	❑	❑
Master's degree	❑	❑	❑
Doctorate	❑	❑	❑
Don't Know	❑	❑	❑

21. There are many possible reasons for not completing school. Which of the following are reasons why you left school? Mark (X) all that apply.

- ❑ Difficulties understanding the language
- ❑ Expelled or suspended
- ❑ Family needed financial help
- ❑ Family thought I should leave school
- ❑ Marriage
- ❑ Moved too often
- ❑ Not interested in school
- ❑ Peer pressure
- ❑ Personal/family illness
- ❑ Poor grades in school
- ❑ Pregnancy
- ❑ Problems with alcohol
- ❑ Problems with drugs
- ❑ Problems with teachers
- ❑ School work too difficult
- ❑ To enter armed forces
- ❑ To take a job
- ❑ Transportation difficulties
- ❑ Other (please specify) _____

22. Why did you decide to prepare for and take the GED Tests? Mark (X) all that apply.

- ❑ Personal enrichment
- ❑ Required by my present job
- ❑ Required for a job I am seeking
- ❑ Required for educational admission
- ❑ Required to enter armed forces
- ❑ To become a U.S. citizen
- ❑ Other (please specify) _____

Thank you very much for participating in this important survey.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope or, if that envelope has been separated from this form, address your own envelope to: Louise Conner, Library Research Service, 201 E. Colfax Ave., Suite 309, Denver, CO 80203-1799.

Remember, if you move between now and this time next year, please let us know your new address so we can include you in next year's survey.

You should receive your check for five dollars ($5.00) within four to six (4-6) weeks of our receiving your response.

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